DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 238 923 TM 840 019

AUTHOR Macintosh, Henry G.
TITLE Profiles.
PUB DATE Jan 83
NOTE 17p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Association for Educational Assessment (Blantyre, Malawai, June 13-17, 1983)
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Viewpoints (120)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Evaluation Methods; Foreign Countries; Measurement Techniques; *Profiles; *Research Methodology; Research Needs; Research Problems; Student Evaluation; Validity
IDENTIFIERS *Scottish Pupil Profile Project; *Swindon Record of Personal Achievement; United Kingdom

ABSTRACT

An introduction to profiles is presented with examples provided to permit an overall appraisal of the potential of profiles, of the principles upon which they might be based, and of the problems that will have to be overcome if their potential is to be realized in practice. The larger scale examples of profiles discussed are the Scottish Pupil Profile Project and the Swindon Record of Personal Achievement. A discussion of grid-style profiles is also included. (PN)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED238923

ABSTRACT

PROFILES

by

H G Macintosh, Secretary, Southern Regional Examinations Board for the Certificate of Secondary Education

Any attempt to define and assess the outcomes of education must have as one of its primary concerns the question of how best to describe performance in relation to these outcomes. The most commonly used means for describing information derived from assessment are lettered grades (A, B, E, U etc) numbers usually expressed as a single total mark or as a percentage and oral and written reports or references. All these methods suffer from individual deficiencies but one deficiency in particular stands out which is common to all namely the lack of feedback which they provide to students and teachers. Much effort has been devoted in recent years to trying to overcome this on the one hand by looking at ways in which letters and marks can be treated in order to make them more useful and on the other by looking at the overall approach to presentation and considering how best to create frameworks which can enhance the range and quality of what is presented. The term 'profile' has been used to describe such frameworks and it is with profiles that this paper will be concerned.

The paper will first provide a definition of a profile and will then suggest reasons for the current interest in profiling. It will go on to consider the advantages of profiles and the problems associated with their use. A number of examples of profiles in current use will be provided in order to illustrate specific points. Particular attention will be paid to the so called 'grid-style' profiles which are being extensively developed in the United Kingdom at the present time, in association with courses designed to equip young school leavers as effectively as possible for the world of work (vocational preparation). The advantages and disadvantages of grid-style profiles will be considered again making use of examples for illustrative purposes.

The paper will conclude with an appraisal of the overall potential of profiles, of key principles upon which profiles might be based and of the problems that will have to be overcome if their potential is to be realised in practice.

TM 840 019

HGM/MEW
5.1.83.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

H G Macintosh

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PROFILES

by Henry G Macintosh
Secretary - SREB

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A PROFILE?

The term 'profile' in relation to educational measurement is used to describe multi-dimensional methods of presenting information, usually about individuals and their achievements, attributes or performances. A profile is thus not a method of assessment, but an approach to presentation and it is in consequence only as full and as varied as the information it seeks to present. Profiles differ from one another therefore in two major ways: in the 'content' of what is being presented and in the ways in which that presentation takes place. Whatever its outward form however a profile ought to contain three basic elements:

(a) A list of items as for example, subjects, skills, personal qualities, course descriptions.

(b) A means of indicating the level and/or nature of performance in respect of each chosen item. The descriptors used can include such things as marks, grades, verbal reports, percentages, histograms or graphs - the list is endless, but they all make use of some combination of letters or numbers.

(c) Some indication of the kind of evidence that has been used to arrive at the descriptions provided.

Many profiles in current use incidentally neglect the last of these to their disadvantage.

SOME REASONS FOR THE CURRENT INTEREST IN PROFILES

The current popularity of profiles has stemmed largely from a growing concern about the inadequacy of the information provided by most present day assessment. This concern derives from a number of different sources. For example, the move towards universal comprehensive secondary education has created pressure to broaden the focus of assessment in the interests of all students and not merely the academic minority. It has also led to a shift in emphasis from labelling and grading to diagnosis and evaluation and hence to a shift from norm to criterion referencing as the basis for comparison. A further major thrust has been sparked off by the growth of large scale youth unemployment. This has led to much work being undertaken upon the identification, assessment and description of clusters of skills (preferably transferable) whose mastery will assist the transition from school to work by making young people more 'employable'. All this has led to a marked increase in the development and use of profiles.

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE INCREASED USE OF PROFILES

This work has already led to a significant reappraisal of assessment techniques for use in large scale assessment programmes by placing much greater emphasis inter alia upon assessment over time, upon observation and upon greater use of more informa assessment. It has also increased the range of those involved in the assessment process itself and drawn attention to the whole question of the audience which uses the results of assessment and its very varied needs. Most significantly of all it has highlighted a number of issues whose resolution is critical to the future development of constructive assessment. Amongst the most important of these are the potential discontinuities between the ongoing/internal (formative) and the terminal/external (summative) uses of assessment and their implications for the establishment of the credibility of profiles: staff development and

/training in the . . .

training in the construction and use of assessment and profiles; the problems associated with the measurement and presentation of information about personal qualities; the problems associated with the measurement and presentation of information regarding progression over time and finally the implications of a negotiated curriculum for its evaluation and for the assessment of individuals. All these issues will be amplified by reference to a number of examples of profiles and their operation. These it is hoped will put a little flesh upon the bare bones of the opening paragraphs of this paper.

SOME SMALL SCALE EXAMPLES OF PROFILES

Probably the crudest form of profile is that which results from giving the scores of a particular student (whether expressed in grades, marks or percentages) upon all the component elements of his or her course. For example, instead of giving Margaret Callaghan a single overall mark or grade for her Physics course the following information could be provided:

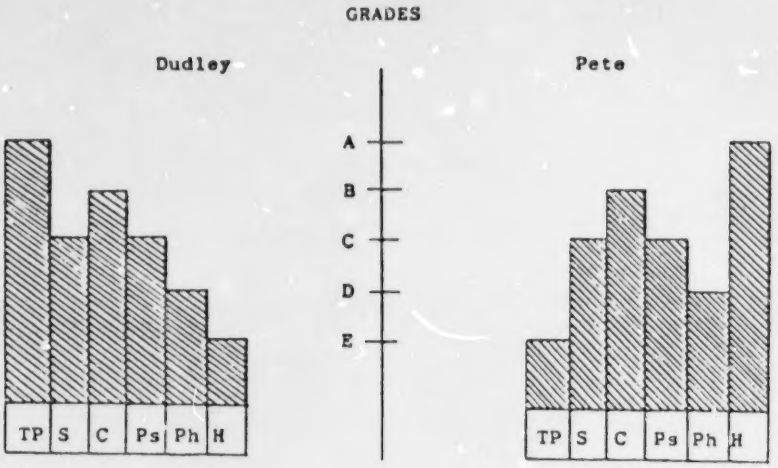
Margaret Callaghan	Physics: Course No 5 1982/83
Heat	75%
Light	40%
Sound	79%
Electricity	86%
Mechanics	50%

This approach could be further extended to show how Margaret had performed within a particular section of the course upon the various assessment methods which had been used. For example, the 75% obtained by her for Heat could be broken down as follows:

		Weighting
Laboratory work	62%	20%
Personal project	89%	20%
Homework	82%	20%
Final examination	67%	40%

In order to interpret this data, particularly if comparisons between students are intended it will almost certainly be necessary to have additional information; for example have the percentages quoted been standardized in any way.

The next example shows profiles presented visually in the form of bar graphs, in respect of two student teachers.



KEY

TP Teaching Practice

S Sociology

C Comparative Education

Ps Psychology

Ph Philosophy

H History of Education

In this example a simple conflation of grades could all too easily suggest that both students were of equal merit. Inspection of the profiles, however, reveals substantial differences in performance in relation to teaching practice and the history of education, differences which could have significant implications for the two students and for their potential future employers.

The examples given so far in this paper, based as they are upon a relatively limited range of marks, percentages and grades, provide little or nothing in the way of information about the reasons for specific student performance. Why for example does Margaret apparently find Light a more difficult topic in Physics than Electricity or why is Dudley apparently better than Pete on teaching practice? The provision of answers to these questions or rather the identification of possible reasons for statements such as these will require a rather more complex profile.

Michael Simpson (1976) describes such a profile, in this case it is used for medical students at MacMaster University in Canada, after the completion of each major phase or unit in the curriculum. It consists of two sections, the first (A) allows the tutor to indicate and comment upon the extent of a student's attainment of the general goals of the medical curriculum. The second section (B) carried tutor comment upon how far the student has attained the goals of the particular phase or unit, and his or her own personal objectives. Areas of exceptional ability are also remarked upon, as are the areas requiring attention. Finally, the sheet carries the overall decision as to whether the student is ready for the next phase of work.

The following example shows how a Section A might be used. Only the first four parts have been completed.

The subject emerges as a possible misfit as regards the general practice of medicine, but as one who might be better oriented towards social work.

Extract of Student Profile Form (Simpson 1976)

SECTION A

Key to Ratings

Few or none of these behaviours demonstrated	Some of these behaviours shown but definitely lacks some	Many of these behaviours but some minor difficulties	Outstanding ability demonstrated	Not Applicable
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please mark where the student was at the beginning and end of the phase in each of the following respects, according to the above key. Give an explanation for your ratings in the space provided, as appropriate.

Section A: General Goals of the MD Programme	Explanation Comments
1. Problem-Solving Ability. Able to identify and define health problems. Search for information, synthesize information into a conceptual framework. Beginning NA End NA	At first very poorly motivated and seemed to be a poor prospect. Difficult to understand why this course was undertaken. Later (after he became engaged to a third year student) a more determined effort was made with some success.
2. Understanding of Concepts and Mechanisms. Given a health problem is able to examine the underlying physical or behavioural mechanisms including a spectrum of phenomena, from molecular events to those involving the patients family and community as appropriate. Beginning NA End NA	Seems to respond better to situations relating directly to pastoral matters. Has completed some useful case studies at the Local Health Centre, but seems uninterested in clinical aspects
3. Personal Characteristics Recognises, maintains and develops personal characteristics and attitudes relevant to professional life. These include: (a) Awareness of personal assets, potential limitations and emotional reactions. Shows intellectual honesty/insight. Beginning NA End NA	Particularly lacking in self-awareness. Interested mainly in the plight of others, with a tendency always towards sociological aspects rather than medical.
(b) Responsibility and Dependability, e.g. Comes prepared to contribute to the tutorial, fulfills commitments. Beginning NA End NA	At first took an active part in tutorial discussion but gradually allowed general lack of interest to make itself manifest.
4. Clinical Skills (see specific form for this phase or unit.	
5. Self-Directed Learning. Is becoming a self-directed learner, recognising personal educational needs, selecting appropriate learning resources and evaluates progress validly. Beginning NA End NA	
6. Group Interpersonal Skills. Is able to function as a productive member of a small group, acknowledges others contributions, shows awareness of and ability to relate to others feelings, identifies and copes with group problems. Beginning NA End NA	

This particular profiles raises a number of significant issues. First it starts to move away from specific subjects and specific course titles and concentrates instead upon skills and concepts although these are still set out in relation to a course of study in this case Medicine. Secondly, it introduces the notion of rating performance against a scale. Thirdly, it attempts the assessment of personal characteristics both in an individual and in a group context. This raises a whole series of issues, and in particular the effect of such assessment upon the relationship between teacher and student. There are also problems of definition; how, for example, does a particular personal characteristic such as persistence actually manifest itself in practice. On occasions too the institutional environment within which students are taught may not permit certain qualities to develop as, for example, leadership; in such circumstances it would be unreasonable to expect students to rate highly. Finally this profile sets out to illustrate progression between the beginning of a section of the course and its conclusion.

SOME LARGER SCALE EXAMPLES OF PROFILES

The examples provided so far in this paper have all been relatively small in terms of the numbers of students and institutions involved. As such they cannot adequately highlight two issues of central importance to the successful development of profiles; the reconciliation of formative and summative usage and staff training. The examples given to date also fail to raise the possibility of negotiated records compiled jointly by teacher and student. All three points can, however, be illustrated by reference to two of the best known larger profiling schemes developed in the United Kingdom in recent years - the Scottish Pupil Profile Project and the Swindon Record of Personal Achievement with its subsequent extention into the Record of Personal Experience Qualities and Qualifications. Both these schemes have been substantially documented and carefully evaluated (see for example SCRE 1977, Swales 1979 and Burgess and Adams, 1980). A minimum of detail regarding their actual operation will, therefore, be given in this paper.

PUPIL PROFILE PROJECT (PPP)

The recording and reporting system that was eventually adopted by PPP after a five year trial in some forty Scottish comprehensive schools involved three stages:

1. The collection of the assessments made by the teachers.

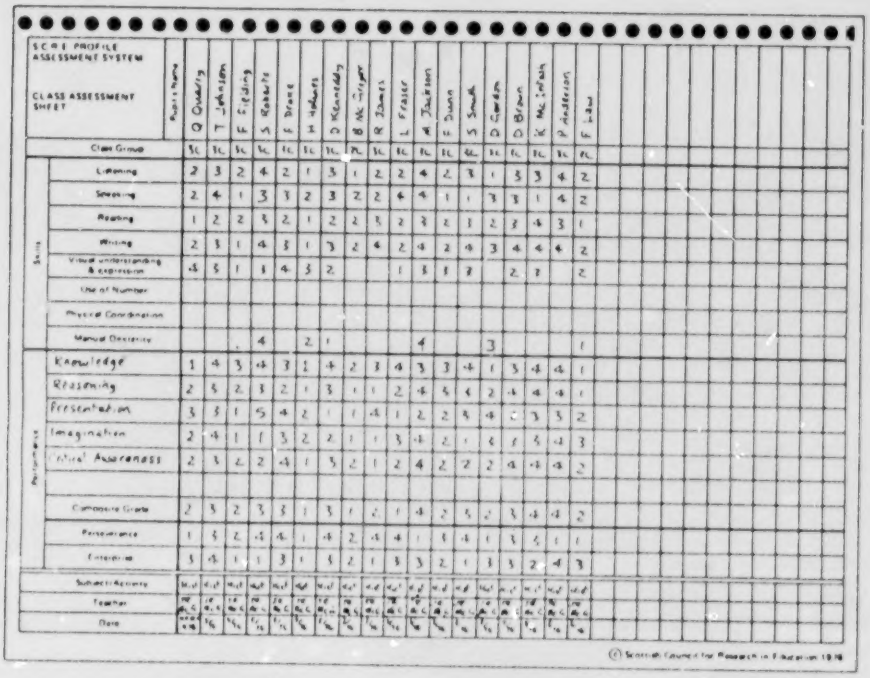
2. The collation of these assessments and their transfer from class group sheets to individual pupil profiles.

3. The production of a school leaving certificate based on the information contained in the profiles.

The teacher's assessment form for a class group in History and the completed school leaving report or profile in respect of a single pupil from that class are shown below in Figures 1 and 2.

Figure 1

The SCRE Profile Assessment System Class Assessment Sheet



SCRE PROFILE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

CLASS ASSESSMENT SHEET

Pupil's Name	Q Quigley	T Johnston	F Fielding	S Roberts	S Brand	N Hughes	D McKendrick	B McGregor	R Jones	L Fraser	A Jackson	F Dunn	S Smith	D Gordon	D Brown	K McIntosh	P Anderson	F Law
Class Group	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c	5c
Skills: Listening	2	3	2	4	2	1	3	1	2	2	4	2	3	1	3	3	4	2
Skills: Speaking	2	4	1	3	3	2	3	2	2	4	4	1	1	3	3	1	4	2
Skills: Reading	1	2	2	3	2	1	2	2	3	2	3	2	1	2	3	4	3	1
Skills: Writing	2	3	1	4	3	1	3	2	4	2	4	2	4	3	4	4	4	2
Skills: Visual understanding & expression	4	5	1	1	4	3	2			1	3	1	1		2	1		2
Skills: Use of Number																		
Skills: Muscle Coordination																		
Skills: Manual Dexterity				4		2	1				4			3				1
Personal Qualities: Knowledge	1	4	3	4	3	1	4	2	3	4	3	3	4	1	3	4	4	1
Personal Qualities: Reasoning	2	5	2	3	2	1	3	1	1	2	4	5	4	2	4	4	4	1
Personal Qualities: Presentation	3	5	1	5	4	2	1	1	4	1	2	2	3	4	2	3	3	2
Personal Qualities: Imagination	2	4	1	1	3	2	2	1	1	3	4	2	1	4	1	3	4	3
Personal Qualities: Aesthetic Awareness	2	3	2	2	4	1	3	2	1	2	4	2	2	2	4	4	4	2
Personal Qualities:																		
Personal Qualities: Composite Grade	2	3	2	3	3	1	3	1	2	1	4	2	3	2	3	4	4	2
Personal Qualities: Perseverance	1	3	2	4	4	1	4	2	4	4	1	3	4	1	3	4	1	1
Personal Qualities: Enterprise	3	4	1	1	3	1	3	2	1	3	3	2	1	3	3	2	4	3
Subject Assess	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E
Teacher	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E	Ma E
Date	4/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6	1/6

© Scottish Council for Research in Education 1976

Figure 2

An example of a Completed School Leaving Report Using the Form Developed by the Working Party for the SCRE Profile Assessment System

OTHER OBSERVATIONS

(Includes other school activities, other awards and comments on positive personal qualities)

Royal Life-Saving Society - Bronze Medallion
Member School Photographic Club, School Debating Society
Member of School Skiing trip to Austria Jan 1976
She has been resourceful in finding costumes for the school play.
She has recently shown an appreciation and enjoyment of literature and has read widely outside the s llabus.
Works well on group activities; gets on well with both pupils and teachers. Readily accepts responsibility, particularly in school activities.

Notes

The grades A - D represent approximately 25% of the year group in each case.

The skill gradings represent a consensus derived from the individual ratings of each teacher's knowledge and reflect the standard obtained by the pupil with reasonable consistency.

All the information contained in this report is based on profile assessments contributed by each teacher on a continuous and cumulative basis, including observations of personal qualities and informal activities.

© 1979 SCRE

SCHOOL LEAVING REPORT

This is a brief report on Queenie Quarry

Date of Birth 13/7/1960

who completed class S4

in Tanochbrae High School

and left on 3rd July 1976

This report is the result of continuous assessment by all the teachers at their pupil and has the authority of

E P Smith Head Teacher

J Mc Gregor Director

SKILLS

LISTENING	**SPEAKING**
Acts independently and with ability on spoken verbal instructions	Can initiate a point of view
Can interpret and act on most complex instructions	Can make a clear and accurate oral report
Can interpret and act on straightforward instructions	Can describe events orally
Can carry out simple instructions with supervision	Can participate effectively in a discussion
READING	**WRITING**
Understands at least the gist of a written text	Can express himself/herself in writing
Understands the content and implications of most writing in simple expression	Can write a clear and accurate report
Understands the points of view expressed in simple language	Can write a simple account of a story
Can read most newspaper information with no problem in simple instructions	Can write more complex and critical essays
VISUAL UNDERSTANDING AND EXPRESSION	**USE OF NUMBER**
Can communicate ideas visually with ease in a variety of media	Deals accurately with simple and complex situations
Can produce an explanation in the sketches and diagrams	Can handle information and statistics with confidence
Can interpret and make use of visual images such as graphs in a variety of situations	Can handle information and statistics with caution
Can interpret visual images such as sketches and diagrams	Can handle simple numerical situations with difficulty
PHYSICAL CO ORDINATION	**MANUAL DEXTERITY**
A natural ability in games	Has the manual skills for tools and equipment
Makes an effective use of his/her body in games	Can make use of tools and equipment
Can perform with a high degree of co-ordination	Can perform tasks with a high degree of skill
Can perform tasks requiring a high degree of skill	Can perform tasks with caution

SUBJECT/ACTIVITY ASSESSMENT

Curriculum Area	Subjects Studied (including any non-examination courses)	Years of Study	Achievement	Enjoyment (including out-of-school activities)	Perseverance (in work or activity assignments)
Aesthetic Subjects	Drawing	1-4	2	2	1
	Music	1-4	2	1	1
Business Studies					
Community Leisure Activities	Social Education	1-4	1	2	1
Crafts	Pottery	3-4	2	1	1
English	English	1-4	2	1	1
Mathematics	Arithmetic	1-4	1	1	2
Other Languages	German	2-4	2	2	1
Outdoor Studies	Outdoor Pursuits	3-4	2	2	1
Physical Education	General	1-4	1	1	1
Science	Biology	1-4	1	2	1
Social Subjects	History	1-4	2	1	1

The teacher's form allows for the assessment of eight basic skills where these seem relevant to a particular subject. A four point scale is used for this purpose based upon nationally agreed criteria of achievement. The form also allows for the assessment of performance in two parts. The first part as well as providing for an overall composite grade gives a series of blank optional categories which teachers can fill with those components of achievement which they deem appropriate to their subject. In the case of History the five choices were Knowledge, Reasoning, Presentation, Imagination and Critical Awareness. Again a four point scale is used for their assessment, this time devised by the relevant department within the school making use of the guidelines provided in the project's handbook. The second part provides for the grading of the two work related characteristics summarised as enterprise and perseverance which research has shown to have the highest predictive validity with occupational success in later life.

Quite apart from the extensive use of assessment based on scales a number of important considerations arise from the PPP. First there is the question of practicality. There is no doubt that the scheme worked during the trial period and that it proved to be as valid and as reliable as current alternatives as well as being a good deal more informative. On the other hand its operation undoubtedly placed severe strains upon both staff and resources. These strains were incidentally even more severe for the small number of schools which took part in the subsequent Assessment in the Affective Domain Project (Black and Dockrell, SCRE 1978). In general neither resources (the implications for computer-assisted storage retrieval and display have not, for example, been really exploited to date) nor training were made available by either central or local government in Scotland after the project ended in 1977. This has had a markedly adverse effect on the continued use of the profile, although this situation may well change dramatically when the Munn and Dunning proposals are implemented in the middle 1980's.

More significantly still the PPP highlights the problem of reconciling within a single profile the formative and summative uses of assessment and the implications of this for establishing the credibility of profiles. This problem becomes particularly acute when as in the PPP the assessment forms part of a school leaving certificate, in this case the Scottish O-Grade. As Patricia Broadfoot pertinently points out (Burgess and Adams 1980, Chapter 6) such certificates in the United Kingdom have three principal functions which are not easily reconciled, namely, selection, motivation and control of standards and hence accountability. The form taken by any certification process will depend to a large extent upon which of these three functions is considered to be the most important at any given time. If motivation is the main concern then it would be possible to do without formal certificates and operate pupil completed records. If selection or the maintenance of national standards is the top priority then formal certification based upon some external monitor such as GCE examinations is likely to be the order of the day. Profiles offer a measure of compromise between these conflicting demands, but like all compromises they may end up by failing to satisfy anyone. Clearly on the evidence of the overall current usage and acceptability of PPP in practice there is a need for much more centrally supported work to be undertaken on the development of teacher compiled profiles. These can be based upon generally agreed criteria and hence fulfil public expectations regarding comparability. This in turn can lead into work upon what might be termed negotiated records compiled jointly by teacher and pupil. Only if this is done are we likely to begin to approach a genuinely comprehensive method of providing worthwhile information about all pupils.

SWINDON RECORD OF PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT (RPA)

There are, of course, a number of illustrations of negotiated records in current use, some involving groups of schools working together and others involving a single school. Probably the best known group scheme is the Swindon Record of Personal Achievement (RPA), which originated in 1970 for all secondary school children in the County Borough of Swindon between the age of 14 and 16.

Of particular significance in the RPA scheme was the direct involvement of the student in the preparation of his or her own record. It was the student who, within fairly flexible guidelines, decided what constituted an achievement. It was the student who looked after the record and the way this was maintained would incidentally tell a would-be user something of importance about its owner. A second important feature was the approach to validation;when an entry was made in the record it had to be verified by an adult who knew it to be factually correct. The original reason for this as Don Stansbury points out (Burgess and Adams 1980 Chapter Four) was to ensure that students did not falsify their records - a precaution which in the event proved totally unnecessary. It turned out, however, to be important for quite different reasons, since it involved people other than teachers, including potential employers directly in the processes of student assessment. It also undermined, indeed rendered impossible, the practice of comparison between students which is such a prominent feature of most assessment. A third issue which arose was that of credibility. Sadly as the evaluator's report shows (T Swales 1979) the RPA was not particularly successful in gaining the support of employers who in the main continued to see the profile as supplementary to more traditional methods of selection such as interviews and public examination results. An unfortunate result of this attitude was a tendency within participating institutions to confine the record to students of lower ability for whom public examinations were not thought appropriate.

One of the original authors of the RPA, Don Stansbury, developed an extension of the scheme in 1974 when he moved to Totnes in Devon. This was called the Record of Personal Experience, Qualities and Qualifications - a much more revealing description of its intentions. He concentrated at Totnes on making the scheme manageable for class units of between twenty and thirty and involving the whole ability range. He also became convinced from his experiences with both schemes that unless a record of this kind became an underwritten part of a national system then it would be impossible to establish the necessary credibility. This reinforces the points made by Patricia Broadfoot in relation to the PPP which were referred to earlier.

GRID-STYLE PROFILES

It was suggested earlier in the paper that one of the two main driving forces behind the development and increased use of profiles was youth unemployment. This has led to increased national concern in Britain with the whole question of vocational preparation or how best to equip the young school leaver for the world of work taken as a whole. Central to the promotion of this concept of 'voc prep' has been the identification, development and assessment of basic skills. This in turn has focussed attention upon informative and helpful ways of providing information about performance in respect of those skills and hence led to profiles and in particular to grid-style profiles. These last are simply profiles which record information through the use of a grid or grids. The content of these grids consists of designated levels of performance in relation to defined skills thus permitting the student to be graded against agreed criteria. There is nothing particularly new about this. As already indicated grids formed part of the Scottish PPP Scheme and have been used in public

/examinations for the . . .

examinations for the assessment of practical work. Grid-style profiles have considerable merits; they are easy to fill in, compact, cover wide areas of skills and are on the face of it much more informative to both employer and student than other forms of certification and grading.

These merits and the political imperatives which have led to the increased use of such profiles in conjunction with 'voc prep' courses have unfortunately tended to obscure their disadvantages, some of which raise fundamental issues about the nature and purposes of profiling. Both merits and disadvantages can be illustrated by reference to the profile devised by the City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI) for use with its 365 course on Vocational Preparation (General). This is currently being extensively piloted and evaluated (see Stratton 1982). Other examples of profiles using the same model but involving different skills have been produced in the United Kingdom by the Royal Society of Arts (RSA), the Technician and Business Education Councils (TEC and BEC) now amalgamated, and the Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit (FEU), for the core in 'A Basis for Choice' (ABC) (1979).

Probably the most fundamental criticism is their potential lack of congruance with the needs of students. The grid model is essentially outward looking, designed first and foremost to serve the needs of the user and not those of the student. 'Assessment in Youth Training: Made to Measure?' (1982) makes this point in another way when it draws a distinction between a record which it defines as evidence upon which outsiders can make judgements and a report which it regards as judgement which outsiders can take as evidence. Given that this distinction is a valid one and to be fair there is probably an element of both record and report in most profiles then grid-style profiles, like PPP and City and Guilds 365, are primarily reports and the Swindon Scheme is primarily a record. It is the summative/formative distinction once again. Other points of potential weakness are:

(i) the use of imprecise descriptors. How 'simple' is simple? What is a 'routine task'? How does one define 'from scratch'? (All these words or phrases appear in the CGLI pilot scheme.)

(ii) the uniform nature of the progression between grades. Often the steps required of the student are extremely large and it is in consequence difficult to define or measure progression, particularly if the course involved is a short one. The section on Visual Understanding provides a good illustration of this point.

(iii) the existence of overlapping categories; the tendency to confuse skills with attitudes and the use of narrow and non-functional skills.

The overall thrust of these points is to suggest that unless grid-style profiles are extremely carefully designed and flexibly used they will hinder negotiations between learner and teacher and will neither encourage nor adequately assess student development and hence progression. Having been critical by implication of the CGLI Pilot as an example of a grid-style profile it is only fair to draw attention to ways in which through trialling and evaluation the CGLI has tried to meet the criticisms which have been levelled against this particular model.

First of all great care has been taken with the wording used to describe the various grade levels and whilst not entirely successful a great deal of the vagueness which plagues such grade descriptions has been eliminated. Secondly, the profile report has tried to deal realistically with the measurement of progression. This has been done in three main ways. It has not attempted to suggest that the gaps between the four grades on the grid are equal in size, but has instead indicated an overall progression from a basic level to a high level. It has also required those completing it to provide examples of the relevant abilities as demonstrated in a practical work context. Finally the report itself covers a relatively short four week period so that progression can be shown over a series of relatively short time spans. Thirdly, the design of the report has endeavoured to resolve the summative/formative clash by linking the abilities to be measured thus permitting a helpful summative judgement to be made without eliminating valuable formative data. Fourthly, the students themselves have been significantly involved, although this involvement stops short of actual negotiation about the nature and content of the course itself. This involvement has been stimulated in three ways; by providing opportunities for the students to discuss and disagree with the judgements made on the record; by requiring students, as an integral part of their course, to keep a daily record of experience and by a weekly review of progress between student and teacher which results in an agreed and signed statement from both parties about areas of progress and areas which need improvement. The overall documentation is contained in a Trainee Log Book which remains the property of the student. Further developments will undoubtedly take place as the scheme becomes operational and practical experience is gained.

PILOT SCHEME

PROFILE REPORT — FOUR WEEKLY REVIEW

This profile shows the levels which have been reached during the last four weeks and the learning activities which have taken place.

ATTAINMENTS IN BASIC ABILITIES

		4 (Basic Level)	3	2	1 (High Level)
SOCIAL ABILITIES	WORKING WITH COLLEAGUES 1	Can cooperate with others when led	Can work with other members of group to achieve common aims	Understands own position and results of own actions within a group	Is an active, decisive member of group. Helps and encourages others
	WORKING WITH THOSE IN AUTHORITY 2	Can follow verbal instructions for simple tasks and can perform them under supervision	Can follow a series of verbal instructions and carry them out independently	Can carry out a series of tasks effectively, given minimum instructions	Inspires confidence in those in authority and communicates well with them
	SELF-AWARENESS 3	Is aware of own personality and situation	Can determine own strengths, weaknesses and preferences with some guidance	Has good basic understanding of own situation, personality and motivation	Has a thorough understanding of own personality and abilities and their implications
COMMUNICATION	TALKING AND LISTENING 4	Can hold conversations with workmates, face-to-face or by 'phone. Can take messages	Can follow and give simple descriptions and explanations	Can communicate effectively with a range of people in a variety of situations	Can present a logical and effective argument. Can analyse other's arguments
	READING AND WRITING 5	Can understand and write simple notices, labels and short notes	Can follow and give straightforward written instructions and explanations	Can use instruction manuals and can write reports describing work done	Can select and criticise written data and use it to produce own written work
	VISUAL UNDERSTANDING 6	Can interpret simple signs and indicators	Can, after guidance, make use of basic graphs, charts, tables, drawings, etc.	Can interpret and use basic graphs, charts, tables and drawings unaided	Can construct graphs etc, and extract information to support arguments
PRACTICAL & NUMERICAL ABILITIES	USING EQUIPMENT 7	After demonstration, can use equipment safely to perform simple tasks	With guidance, can use equipment safely to perform multi-step tasks	Can select and use suitable equipment and materials for the job, without help	Can set up and maintain equipment. Can identify/remedy common faults
	DEXTERITY AND COORDINATION 8	Can use everyday implements, can lift, carry and set down objects as directed	Can reliably perform basic manipulative tasks	Can perform complex tasks requiring accuracy and dexterity	Can perform tasks requiring a high degree of manipulative control
	MEASURING 9	Can read graduated linear scales and dials	Can measure out specified quantities of material by length, weight etc.	Can set up and use simple precision instruments	Can set up and use complex precision instruments
	CALCULATING 10	Can identify size, shape, order etc. Can add and subtract whole numbers	Can use $+/-/\times/-$ to solve single-step, whole number problems. Can estimate	Can use $+/-/\times/-$ to solve two-step problems. Can add and subtract decimals	Can use $+/-/\times/-$ to solve multi-step problems. Can multiply and divide decimals
DECISION-MAKING ABILITIES	PLANNING 11	After demonstration, can identify the sequence of steps in a routine task	Can choose from given alternatives the best way of tackling a task	Can modify/extend given plans/routines to meet changed circumstances	Can create new plans/routines from scratch, using all sources of help
	INFORMATION SEEKING 12	Can find information with guidance from supervisor	Can use standard sources of information	Can assemble information from several sources	Shows initiative in seeking and gathering information from a wide variety of sources
	COPING WITH PROBLEMS 13	With guidance, can cope with simple, everyday problems	Can cope with complex but routine problems. Seeks help if needed	Can cope with unusual problems by adapting familiar routines independently	Can offer sensitive and effective help to other people facing problems
	EVALUATING RESULTS 14	Can assess own results with guidance. Asks for advice	Can assess own output for routine tasks independently	Can assess own performance and identify possible improvements	Can identify other's difficulties and so help to improve group performance

N/O — No opportunity to assess.

Name of Trainee D_____ T_____

Name of Scheme *YOP Community Playgroup*

Period covered by this review *1 Month* *26.2.82 — 23.3.82*

© 1981. City and Guilds of London Institute.

CONCLUSION

Enough should now have been said in this paper (perhaps more than enough) about profiles and sufficient examples provided to permit an overall appraisal of the potential of profiles, of the principles upon which they might be based and of the problems that will have to be overcome if their potential is to be realised in practice. Geoff Stanton (1982) lists some eight possible functions for profiles which range from acting as a structured reference through to the provision of feedback to learners and quality control of courses. Profiles and profiling thus constitute a powerful tool for promoting and facilitating the constructive use of information derived from assessment in a wide variety of ways and for the benefit of individuals, courses and institutions.

So much for potential. As far as principles are concerned, I would like to suggest that the following six might constitute an adequate basis upon which to build a satisfactory system of profiling for use in schools and other educational institutions. Firstly that of negotiation between student and tutor/teacher. This implies the existence of specific and agreed contracts. Secondly the need to involve a wider range of people including peer groups in contributing to the profile than simply 'the teacher and the student'. Thirdly that character interpretations and personal characteristics should not form part of the recording system. Information in these areas will in practice emerge profitably and extensively from the nature of the negotiation and from the ways in which agreed tasks are carried out. but that does not justify their forming part of the recording system itself. Fourthly that profiles should remain wherever possible in the possession of those to whom they refer and should be completely 'open' documents. Fifthly that the across-the-board emphasis on profiles should be upon validity and not upon reliability although this does not mean that the recording system where it relates to particular tasks or specific activities will, of itself, be unreliable. Nor does it mean that reliability in relation to recording is an insignificant activity. Finally there is a need to stress the ongoing nature of profiles as a recording system. This is in marked contrast to the terminal nature of almost all current reporting practices, one of the results of which is to give the certificates which usually constitute the formal record of what has occurred a life of their own. Records unlike reports ought to be much more easily related to the period of time with which they are directly concerned and come in consequence to have their own in-built self-destruct mechanism which makes them disappear as other records become available.

The principal obstacles to the future development of profiles would seem to be two in number and both have been referred to several times already in this paper. The first relates to the question of whether a single profile can be made to serve a number of major needs at once and in particular whether it can face both inwards and outwards and satisfy both learner and user. This is the record/report formative/summative issue. On the evidence available to date this problem has yet to be satisfactorily resolved, although reference to the CGLI profile will show that improvements can be and have been made. Part of the problem lies in the retention within so many profiles of norm-referencing and a desire to compare students with one another rather than criterion referencing where the basis for comparison is stated levels of performance or mastery. Another part of the problem lies in our inadequate knowledge of how young people think and hence learn, and in particular how they acquire and use skills. This often means that the hypothesised stages of progression which appear in profiles bear little relationship to the actual stages of learning. We may well be in the business of making a difference and not simply of measuring it, but unless and until we can identify and then communicate these differences without in the process

disturbing the learning and teaching that has brought them about then we will achieve little.

The second major problem is a practical one and shows itself in two ways. The first of these is the question of handling profiles as an organisational problem. The second relates to assessment. Made to Measure (1982) emphasises four principles for assessment which it regards as essential for the successful development of profiles.

(i) Assessment should play an intrinsic role in individual learning.

(ii) Assessment should reflect a genuine balance between the values of 'reliability' and those of 'self-reliance'.

(iii) Course grids and assessment methods should match one another.

(iv) Assessment should actively involve learners in the determination and evaluation of course activities (negotiation).

The implementation of profiles which meet criteria such as these demands an understanding of a range of assessment techniques well beyond those with which most teachers are familiar. It also requires assessment methods to be matched to course goals, an exercise which is all too rarely carried out in either classroom or school and is, moreover, one which many teachers find extremely difficult.

The answers to both these problems lies in staff development and in-service training both for individuals and for institutions. We now know enough about profiles to be able to design them particularly if their intended usage is relatively limited. The quantum leap lies in being able to operate them in practice in the reasonable certainty that they are doing what we want them to do. The pay-off resulting from a successful profile in terms of enhanced feedback to both student and teacher and its positive impact upon professional development are, however, enormous. In view of this the development of profiles is surely worth a major and concerted effort by all interested parties.

JANUARY 1983

REFERENCES

A Basis for Choice. Report of a study group on 16+ pre-employment courses. Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit, Department of Education and Science, London, 1979.

Assessment in Youth Training: Made to Measure?. Jordanhill College of Education, Glasgow, 1982.

Burgess T and Adams E, (eds) Outcomes of Education. Macmillan Education, 1980.

Dockrell W B and Black H D, Assessment in the Affective Domain: What can be done about it? Scottish Council for Research in Education, Edinburgh, 1978.

Profiles. A review of issues and practice in the use and development of student profiles. Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit, Department of Education and Science, London, 1982.

Profiles and Profile Reporting. Combe Lodge Report, Volume 14, Number 13, Blagdon, 1982.

Scottish Pupil Profile Project (Making the Most of Teachers' Knowledge of Pupils). Hodder and Stoughton for Scottish Council for Research in Education, Edinburgh, 1977.

D Stansbury, Record of Personal Experience, Qualities and Qualifications: Tutor's Handbook. RPE Publications, South Brent, Devon, 1974.

Stratton N, An Evaluation of a Basic Abilities Profiling System across a range of Education and Training Provision. City and Guilds of London Institute, 1982.

Simpson, M A, The Evaluation of Medical Students in the Absence of Examinations. Medical Education, Volume 10, 1976.

Swales, T, Pamphlet No 16, Record of Personal Achievement. Schools Council, London, 1979.

HGM/MEW